

Message Text

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ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 DODE-00 PM-03 SS-15 NSC-05

SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PRS-01 SR-02 ORM-01

AID-05 L-02 H-01 /062 W
----- 060182

R 261047Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2678

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC

CDR JCRC CP SAMAE SAN THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1394

D/PW FOR HENDERSON

GENEVA FOR SIEVERTS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: DEAN CASE: LPF AGAIN DENIES KNOWLEDGE OF
DEAN/SHARMAN WHEREABOUTS

REF: VIENTIANE 1388

1. AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HAS FURNISHED US AMBASSADOR BORTH-
WICK'S REPORT TO CANBERRA ON HIS MEETING WITH PGNU FOREIGN
MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT MORNING FEBRUARY 26 TO DELIVER
LETTER FROM GOA FONMIN WILLESEE (REFTEL). TEXT OF REPORT
FOLLOWS:

A. QUOTE - I SAW PHOUMI BY APPOINTMENT THIS MORNING
AND DELIVERED THE MINISTER'S LETTER. HE PRODUCED A
LETTER TO HIMSELF FROM NLHX REPRESENTATIVE VIENTIANE
DATED 24 FEBRUARY WHICH HE SAID WOULD BE FORWARDED TO
US AS SOON AS TRANSLATED. IT AMOUNTED IN EFFECT TO AN
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UNCOMPROMISING RESTATEMENT THAT CAREFUL ENQUIRY HAD

DISCLOSED NO TRACE OF PRISONERS' ENTRY OR PRESENCE IN NLHX ZONE, PLUS CRITICISM OF KHAM KEUT EVIDENCE PROVIDED BY FAR ESCAPEE SINCE THEIR SCRUPULOUS OBSERVANCE OF TREATY AND PROTOCOL RULED OUT POSSIBILITY OF EXISTENCE OF ANY SUCH. AS WELL MEKONG WAS ALSO TRAVERSED BY THAI PATROL BOATS WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE.

B. QUOTE - I SAID TO THE MINISTER THAT THIS REPLY WOULD BE BOUND TO HAVE THE MOST PAINFUL AND UNFORTUNATE EFFECT. WE WERE WHOLELY CONVINCED THAT SHARMAN HAD BEEN TAKEN PRISONER AT THEIR CHECKPOINT AND UNTIL MID-DECEMBER IMPRISONED AT KHAM KEUT. TO DENY ALL THIS CALLED INTO QUESTION GOOD FAITH OF NLHX IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT. A SOLUTION TO THIS ISSUE WOULD SURELY BE IN OUR COMMON INTEREST AND THIS MESSAGE WAS NOT TAKING US VERY FAR. IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION, PHOUMI LEFT ME WITH IMPRESSION THAT IT HAD BEEN PREPARED IN RESPONSE TO OUR REPRESENTATIONS OF MID-JANUARY. WITHOUT DISOWNING IT HE SAID HE WOULD ASK VIENG SAY FOR A FURTHER EXAMINATION OF ALL THE EVIDENCE TOGETHER WITH ANYTHING FURTHER WE COULD PRODUCE.

C. QUOTE - FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH THERE MAY BE SOME ENCOURAGEMENT IN THIS ASSURANCE. THE MATTER IS NOT REGARDED AS CLOSED NOR COULD WE ALLOW IT TO BE. EVEN SO I CANNOT PRETEND TO FIND MUCH COMFORT IN THE MESSAGE ITSELF. PHOUMI DENIES IMPLICATION THAT THIS IS A COVER UP MADE NECESSARY BECAUSE THE MEN ARE ALREADY DEAD, WHICH HE SAYS WOULD BE QUITE INCOMPATIBLE WITH NLHX STANDARD TREATMENT OF ITS PRISONERS.

D. QUOTE - SO FAR AS SOTH'S VISIT GOES, I SAID THAT THIS MUST HAVE AN OBVIOUS EFFECT ON POSSIBLE TIMING OF ANY VISIT AND LEFT IT AT THAT. I ASSUME THAT IF WE HAVE NO PROGRESS TO REPORT IN SIX WEEKS IT WILL BE OUT OF THE QUESTION. UNQUOTE.

2. ACCORDING TO AUSTRALIAN FIRST SECRETARY, BORTHWICK FURTHER TOLD PHOUMI THAT LPF RESPONSE WAS UNACCEPTABLE. HE THEREFORE ASKED FOR PERMISSION TO VISIT SAM NEUA TO PURSUE CASE PERSONALLY OR, FAILING THAT, TO VISIT KHAM KEUT AREA. PHOUMI REPORTEDLY DID NOT RESPOND DIRECTLY TO TRAVEL REQUEST BUT INSTEAD SAID SOMETHING ABOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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INITIATING FURTHER INQUIRIES.

3. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE BORTHWICK HANDLED THIS LATEST LPF "RESPONSE" CORRECTLY. WE RECOMMEND THAT, AS WITH PREVIOUS INFORMATION ON THIS CASE, WORD OF THIS DEVELOPMENT BE PASSED TO DEAN'S PARENTS WITH OUR OBSERVATION THAT IT APPEARS TO BE NO MORE CONCLUSIVE (OR MORE SATISFACTORY) THAN WAS LPF COMMUNICATION OF DECEMBER 23.

4. WE INTEND TO PROCEED WITH PLANS DESCRIBED VIENTIANE
1341. IN ADDITION, AMBASSADOR WILL SEE PRIME MINISTER,
FOREIGN MINISTER, SOVIET AMBASSADOR AND PERHAPS PRINCE
SOUPHANOUVONG TO COMMUNICATE OUR DISSATISFACTION WITH
LPF POSITION AND TO PRESS AGAIN FOR PGNU/LPF ACTION.
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WELFARE & WHEREABOUTS, DETENTION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975VIENTI01394
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750068-0759
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975029/aaaaahtt.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION DPW
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 VIENTIANE 1388
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30 JUN 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEAN CASE: LPF AGAIN DENIES KNOWLEDGE OF DEAN/SHARMAN WHEREABOUTS
TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA, AS, US, (DEAN, CHARLES), (SHARMAN), (BORTHWICK)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006